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Chicago Commons: A Social
Settlement.

PIECE IS BRITTLE -
HANDLE WITH CARE.

(1899)

ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

CHICAGO COMMONS

A SOCIAL SETTLEMENT

With Illustrations,



140 NORTH UNION STREET
CHICAGO, MARCH, 1899

Published for

THE RESIDENTS OF THE SETTLEMENT

By their Executive Committee

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NOTE.—We are indebted to *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Monthly* for the illustrations marked with the asterisk (*) and to the Monon Railroad Passenger Department for that marked (†). The other views are from photographs taken from time to time by amateur photographers among the residents.

Introductory Note

THIS pamphlet is issued by the Residents of Chicago Commons to set forth for the information of those who may be interested enough to inquire, if not to contribute, the outline of the activities constituting the settlement's endeavor. Nothing could be further from the intention of those contributing to its pages than to laud the work of themselves or their fellow-residents. That the activities described are in ideal far beyond achievement, none know better than the little group whose many-sided endeavor is set forth in the following pages.

And while the pamphlet is issued with the chief purpose of approving our effort and our point of view to those who may be able and willing by gifts or personal service to help us in the work, it is not for that alone that these pages are published. If the story of what the Chicago Commons settlement tries, even with poor success, to be and to do and to help others to be and to do, serves as a source of inspiration to some, who, with much better success, may seek to do the like, it will have fulfilled abundantly the purpose of those who have compiled it in the name of

THE RESIDENTS OF CHICAGO COMMONS.

ORGANIZATION OF THE SETTLEMENT

THE CHICAGO COMMONS ASSOCIATION

(Incorporated under the Laws of Illinois to hold the Settlement Property and
Co-operate in the Work)

GRAHAM TAYLOR	PRESIDENT.
JOHN P. GAVIT	SECRETARY.
EDWARD PAYSON	TREASURER.

THE TRUSTEES.

JOHN S. FIELD.	JANE ADDAMS.	DAVID FALES.
CHARLES H. HULBURD.	THOMAS P. BALLARD.	H. M. SCOTT.
EDWIN BURRITT SMITH.	JOHN P. GAVIT.	J. H. STRONG.
EDWARD PAYSON.	GRAHAM TAYLOR.	

ORGANIZATION WITHIN THE SETTLEMENT.

GRAHAM TAYLOR RESIDENT WARDEN.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

CARRIE M. CLAWSON.	ROBERT E. TODD.
JOHN P. GAVIT, Chairman.	NATHAN H. WEEKS.
FLORENCE E. PATRICK.	THE WARDEN.

HOUSE COMMITTEE.

MRS. S. E. FERGUSON.	GERTRUDE E. THAYER.
MRS. J. P. GAVIT.	ROBERT E. TODD, Chairman.
MRS. GRAHAM TAYLOR.	THE WARDEN.

The residents are subdivided further into Sub-Committees on Finance and Propaganda, Interior Life, Vesper Service and Residents' Meeting, Kindergarten, Clubs, Industrial School, Educational Classes and Lectures, Music, Local Charity, Library and Reading Room, Art (Picture Loan Collection, etc.), Sunday Work, Neighborhood Church, Summer Campaign, etc., etc.

Mr. Todd serves as Treasurer for the Residents, Miss Clawson as Settlement Stenographer, Mrs. Ferguson as Housekeeper.

In the smooth running of the domestic machinery we are assisted also by Thomas W. Moore, Miss Mary Clark, Mrs. Mary Shea, Mrs. John Mitchell, and Mrs. Rachel Townsend.

THE RESIDENTS.

(March 1, 1899.)

Miss Mabel M. Bosworth, Hartford, Conn.	Miss Maud I. Purnell, South Manchester, Conn.
Miss Carrie M. Clawson, Chicago Commons.	Vance Rawson, Michigan City, Ind.
Miss Alice B. Coggs, Butler, Ind.	Miss Ellen May Smith, Chicago Commons.
Rev. Henry J. Condit, Chicago Commons.	Prof. Graham Taylor, D.D.,* Chicago Commons.
Mrs. Henry J. Condit, Chicago Commons.	Mrs. Graham Taylor, Chicago Commons.
Mrs. Sarah E. Ferguson, Chicago Commons.	Miss Helen D. Taylor, Chicago Commons.
John P. Gavit,* Chicago Commons.	Graham R. Taylor, Chicago Commons.
Mrs. John P. Gavit, Chicago Commons.	Miss Gertrude E. Thayer, Chicago Commons.
Miss Faith M. Gregg, Colorado Springs, Colo.	Robert E. Todd, Chicago Commons.
Miss Elizabeth V. Myers, Chicago Commons.	Nathan H. Weeks, Chicago Commons.
Miss Florence E. Patrick, Chicago Commons.	

*In this list are included adult residents only. The family includes also the two younger daughters of Prof. and Mrs. Taylor and the infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Gavit.

CHICAGO COMMONS

A SOCIAL SETTLEMENT

140 NORTH UNION STREET, CHICAGO

TELEPHONE, MAIN 3551.

History and Resume of the Social Effort in the Seventeenth Ward of Chicago—
Outline of Activities, Past and Present, and Forethought
for the Future

CHICAGO, MARCH, 1899

A STORY OF CHICAGO COMMONS.

BY JOHN P. GAVIT.

CONSIDERED as a place and a building, Chicago Commons is a distinguished-looking old house, which comes with a surprise into view amid its dingy and unattractive surroundings ten minutes' ride from the center of the city to the west side, and at the six-cornered intersection of Milwaukee avenue with North Union street and Austin avenue in the Seventeenth Ward of Chicago. Considered as an institution, it has come to be a neighborhood center—a sort of cosmopolitan club house in the midst of a great international population. Considered as a dwelling place, it exemplifies the belief of a score and more of persons (including three families), that the home is a social trust, and that individual culture is a social product and involves a social obligation. In the words of its often-repeated definition, its family comprises “a group of persons, more or less blessed with the privileges of what the world calls culture, who choose to live where they seem to be most needed, rather than where the neighborhood is supposed to offer the most of social privilege or prestige.”

To an unusual degree, in its essential idea, Chicago Commons fulfils the dream of one man, for long before its beginning in the flesh of actual existence, it had being in the mind of Prof. Graham Taylor, its founder, and now its resident warden. However its details, and even its main trend of life, may have changed and developed and differentiated, it is essentially the fulfilment of the long-cherished

hope of its present head. At the climax of a devoted pastoral ministry, unusually consecrated to the service of the life of the common people, Professor Taylor found himself in the chair of Christian Sociology at Chicago Theological Seminary, commissioned to train young men for the ministry. For that training, he had long dreamed of a place of first-hand observation, of actual study of actual conditions, both for his own better equipment, and for the benefit of the students whom he should send out into the complex life of the practical, busy, suffering, interdependent world of men and women and children.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE SETTLEMENT.

In May, 1894, the settlement was quietly instituted in an upper room of the dwelling at 124 West Erie street, a few blocks north and west of the present settlement residence. The immediate direction of the enterprise was in the hands of Mr. Herman F. Hegner, now pastor of Bethany Church, Chicago; and no account of the settlement's history, or present success, would be complete or just without a tribute to his untiring perseverance and devotion in the hard and too-easily-overlooked work of excavation as it were, and of true and faithful foundation laying. Several other students of the Seminary joined from time to time in that neighborhood study and affiliation with which the work was modestly begun. Acquaintances were made, careful observation of local conditions was instituted, personal work with individuals and families was undertaken, and the seeds of the present-ramified enterprise were planted with love and earnestness.

In the meanwhile, search was made for a suitable dwelling house for the settlement, and soon the remarkable old building in which we are now residing was fixed upon and leased for a term of five years. The wealthy German family, which in the early war-time days built the fine old house for its homestead, as they sat upon the broad veranda in the summer evenings and looked out upon the gleam of the river a few hundred yards away to the east, never dreamed of the checkered future of their house, with its culmination thirty years or so later, in devotion to the service of the community. The great fire of 1871, turning the tide of Chicago history and geography, turned also the destiny of the old mansion of the Kuhn family. For the family moved away, and the Northwestern railway, burned out of its offices down town, leased the house, built a great rear frame addition, and an enormous three-story fire-proof vault.



A KINDERGARTEN GROUP.

Finally the railroad had other quarters, and from then on it fell rapidly out of caste and repair, until, in 1894, it was, in the front, original building, a sailors' boarding house, and in the rear a closely-crowded Italian tenement. Into this building moved the settlement group, by degrees conquering the place as the Israelites conquered Canaan. For at first the little pioneer party had only a few rooms; the other lodgers continued to lodge, and the Italians held sway still in the rear building, peering through the locked glass doors separating the buildings, and conceiving all sorts of theories, no doubt, as to the motives of the newcomers. And there were other battles to fight, other worlds to conquer. Great gray rats, fearless and impudent, stalked the halls by day as well as by night; small brown creatures sidled up and down the walls and

along the floors, and monster roaches helped dispute inch by inch the territory which the new-comers gained.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD PROBLEM.

And there was a problem in the neighborhood as well. People almost always ask, when we try to tell them the simple story of the settlement, how the neighbors received us. "Do the people among whom you live welcome your efforts in their behalf, and appreciate what you are doing for them, or do they regard you with suspicion as interlopers?" And the very asking of the question shows how far we have drifted from the old-time spontaneity of neighborly relations and mutual human confidence, and how hard it is for well-to-do folk to think of their poorer brethren of the crowded quarters as having the same feelings and impulses as themselves.



PROF. GRAHAM TAYLOR,
FOUNDER AND RESIDENT WARDEN.



A UNION STREET GLIMPSE.

View of Chicago Commons from the Illinois Medical College looking southwest. Tracks in the foreground run east and west on Austin Avenue; the trolley car at right is going northwest on Milwaukee Avenue. Union Street runs north and south.

When Professor Taylor first visited the two brothers who controlled the renting of the great house in which the settlement is now located, an odd conversation took place. "Now, Professor," said one of them, "before we can lease this property to you a few matters must be understood. There are some purposes for which this property cannot be used."

Anybody can be a "Professor" nowadays in Chicago, and the brothers had no means of knowing that the tall, black-clothed man with whom they talked was a minister and a trainer of ministers. How could they tell whether he might be "Professor" of elocution, of music, of legerdemain, of dancing or of the tonsorial art?

"Indeed?" responded the Professor, "and what are the purposes tabooed?"

"Well, you must not open a dance-hall there."

"No, I shall not open a dance-hall."

"A hospital, perhaps?"

"No, I don't want it for a hospital."

"Well, what are you going to use it for?"

"To live in."

"Yes, but how are you going to make your money out of it?"

"Don't expect to make money out of it."

"I mean, how are you going to get your expense back?"

"Don't expect to get it back."

"What is there in it for you, then?"

"Nothing—except a home."

"Do you mean that you are going to live there?"

"Exactly."

"Do you mean to say that you people, who could live on Ashland boulevard, are going deliberately to make your home down here among the Italians, in this dirt and smoke?"

"That is precisely what I mean."

The young man looked at the Professor a long time, and then, turning to his brother, exclaimed: "Well, brother, there are such people!"

And with the neighborhood it was precisely the same. It was inconceivable to the average person that a group of sane people, having had some advantages of education and social privilege, and having something of cash power to separate them from the fellow-humans who had been denied those privileges, should of their own free will and accord ignore ordinary social distinctions and deliberately choose their place of residence among the congestion of the disinherited. That anyone who could live where there are good air, clean streets, green lawns, well-dressed passers-by, should voluntarily share humble surroundings and the pressure of municipal misrule and administrative discrimination, making his home, his citizenship, his neighborhood and fellowship his gift to the community where he could contribute what he had and was to those to whom he chiefly owed it, was so utterly in opposition to ordinary ways of doing and ordinary human motive that it must be prompted by some sort of hypocrisy, and must cover some kind of trickery. These people must have some design upon their money, their children, or their faith.

When they did come to appreciate that "these people" who had come among them desired only their friendship and their confidence;

that they had no proselyting propaganda, no money-making scheme, no purpose to be anything but fellow-men, fellow-citizens, neighbors, the response was unreserved and more than could have been asked. By scores the people came, and from being merely a home in the midst of a crowded and needy neighborhood, the settlement became truly a social center for the community, and such it is increasingly to this day.



A SETTLEMENT LANDSCAPE.
INSPIRING VIEW FROM A REAR WINDOW OF CHICAGO COMMONS.

It is neither a complicated nor a protracted process to reach Chicago Commons. No settlement in Chicago is more accessible. We are far down town, fifteen minutes' walk from the city hall. Residents of the settlement frequently, some of us usually, walk to the down-town shops. North Union street runs north and south, parallel to and between Desplaines and Halsted streets, Milwaukee avenue cutting diagonally across its intersection with Austin avenue. The Commons is two doors south of this six-cornered intersection, on the west side of Union street. Four lines of cars pass the door—Milwaukee avenue cables and the trolley cars of the Elston avenue, West Division street and West Chicago avenue lines. The Grand avenue electrics and the Halsted street electrics pass north and south on Halsted street, one block west, and the Indiana street cars, starting at State and Lake, pass Union street one block north of the Commons. Thus we are accessible from down town directly, from Evanston and north shore lines, from North, South or West Side lines by transfer or, at most, two fares; from Lake street elevated (Canal or Halsted street stations—thence northwest over Milwaukee avenue viaduct or north over Halsted viaduct). Northwestern and Union railroad stations are not exceeding fifteen minutes distant.

THE TRUSTEES' APPEAL.

Chicago Commons Association Board's Endorsement of the Settlement's Work and
Request for Support.

CHICAGO, February 1, 1899.

The undersigned, Trustees of the Chicago Commons Association (incorporated), co-operating in the conduct of the Social Settlement known as "Chicago Commons," desire hereby to bear testimony, in connection with the Settlement's appeal for support for the current year, to our faith in the efficiency and great usefulness of the work accomplished through the Settlement by those having it immediately in charge. We know of no place where so small an investment of money makes possible and secures a larger expenditure of consecrated effort, nor are we aware of any service of greater practical value than that in which these faithful workers are engaged.

In addition to the small group of residents deriving their support through the Settlement treasury, about twenty resident workers provide their own maintenance, including room rent, thus serving not only without expense to the Association, but at a reduction of its fixed charges. Professor Graham Taylor, for instance, as you doubtless appreciate, not only receives no compensation for his invaluable services in the leadership of the work, but pays rent and board for himself and his family at the Commons. The salary list is small, and of those thus engaged there is none who could not obtain larger compensation elsewhere.

The Commons exemplifies hand-to-hand work of devoted men and women with and for their fellows; shares as a Christian home the life of a crowded center, in which homes are maintained often under great disadvantages; endeavors to make available, for those deprived of them, the educative and inspiring influences of culture through literature, music and art; offers a spirit of initiative for the expression of the best impulses of the community, and provides a neutral meeting-ground for the unification in American citizenship of the heterogeneous population in a densely-inhabited industrial district.

It is our conviction that the achievement of the Commons in its local field, in its wide influence upon persons and communities throughout the country, and not least, in its general endeavor for civic and social progress, justifies us in the appeal for support and co-operation. The Settlement workers ask for \$6,000 for the expenses of this year. They could use to advantage much more. Indeed, the effectiveness of the work will be increased in a ratio more than direct by every additional contribution. Moreover, the time surely has come when both economy and permanency demand the relief of the workers from the burden of excessive rent and inadequacy of quarters, by

which too long and unnecessarily they have been hindered. To this end we propose to raise immediately a "housing fund" of not less than \$50,000, with which to provide more suitable and permanent accommodations. Who will be the first to respond to this opportunity?

EDWIN BURRITT SMITH,
CHARLES H. HULBURD,
THOMAS P. BALLARD,
JOHN S. FIELD,

DAVID FALES,
EDWARD PAYSON,
H. M. SCOTT,
J. H. STRONG.

NOTE.—For obvious reasons, three of the Trustees, Miss Jane Addams, of Hull House, and Professor Graham Taylor and John P. Gavit, residents of Chicago Commons, refrain from signing this letter.

A PERSONAL STATEMENT.

Prof. Graham Taylor's Word of Cheer and Appeal to the Friends of Chicago Commons for 1899.

TO THE FRIENDS OF CHICAGO COMMONS:

Chicago Commons enters upon its fifth year with grateful memories of the past and bright hopes for the future. Our faith has been fulfilled, for we believed that if a few of us could stand in the breach long enough, sufficient resource, both personal and financial, would rally to maintain and develop the work. It has been so. From all parts of the city, and from many of its suburbs, a long succession of noble friends, to the number of fifty or more, each year, have joined their self-sacrificing efforts with our own in the service of the common cause. Others in more distant towns or country places have co-operated with us by throwing their quiet homes open to our sick or weary neighbors with unwearied hospitality.

During the past year perhaps the gravest financial crisis the settlement has been obliged to pass through was met as resolutely as generously by the individual gifts and efforts of our trustees and a few other friends. In that union of willing hearts and hands there was proven to be the strength sufficient unto our day ever since, for, without public appeal, and with very few personal solicitations, which the pressure of work would not have allowed the writer to make, the increasing but still modest needs of our ever-growing work have been all the while a little more than met. Closing our fiscal year without debt, we can on this account more confidently and encouragingly appeal for the \$6,000 which, if entrusted to us, we can safely and effectively invest in the social service of the common life. What we have received hitherto has come to us through the faith and free will of nearly a thousand givers scattered all over the country, from the Rocky Mountains to the New England coast. The largest gift received from a single individual during the year was \$500, which was offered without solicitation. The balance, as in former years, came to us in a large number

of small contributions from self-sacrificing friends of meager means. Very sacred to us is the trust of such offers, and very serious are the obligations under which they place us. All we can offer is the gratuitous service of our own lives, in endeavoring to render the utmost service which these offerings enable us to attempt.

Within its local neighborhood the Settlement has won the confidence of all classes more rapidly and to a greater extent than would have seemed possible. The increasing interest and co-operation of the residents of the Settlement in the life and institutions of the neighborhood, especially including the Tabernacle Church, greatly enlarges the scope and depth of the Settlement's direct effort within its own community. On the other hand, the central and accessible location of the residence makes it possible to secure non-resident helpers from other parts of the city and the suburbs, and especially gives to our service more and more of a civic and general rather than a purely local character.

The most serious problem facing the development and even perpetuation of the work of Chicago Commons, however, remains to be solved. The expiration of the five-year lease of our present residence is so near at hand as to make it imperative that a movement be initiated at once to provide permanent quarters for the work which may fairly claim to have been recognized as a permanent feature of Chicago's life and service. Upon this problem both trustees and residents are hard at work, trying to decide upon the best strategic site of the neighborhood, the plans for the most suitable building, and the means of securing Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) to endow the work, either with an interest-bearing fund or with a building which will provide it with both shelter and revenue.

Yours, in the service of the Kingdom and its Christian social order,
GRAHAM TAYLOR.

FOR A NEW BUILDING.

Commons Residents, After Much Conference and Consideration, Unanimously Decide in Favor of The Present Site of the Settlement—The Sum Needed.

AS THESE pages go to press, we are able to announce at last that the residents of the settlement have come to a final and permanent decision in favor of remaining in the present building, and of purchasing that property if the money can be raised with which to do it. Up to the very hour of the closing of these pages, the question of the permanent housing of the settlement has been a problem upon which many considerations compelled various and changing opinion. The expiration of the lease of the present house, referred to elsewhere, raised a dozen questions. The permanency of the population in the present neighborhood, so far down-town, and upon the frontier of the encroaching area of warehouses and factories; the relation of the settlement to the several church parishes, especially that of the Tabernacle, in more attractive sections of the ward, just west of us; the character of

the work which in the long run we should carry on; the cost of purchasing our present building and making it exactly suitable to our needs—these and a dozen other questions, varying in their mutual relation almost from day to day, have faced us for answer, and no one of them could be met with unhesitating decision, so various are the interests and conditions involved, so problematical the trend of life and the relationship of neighborhoods in the coming years.

Hours upon hours of consideration and conference—sometimes far into the night—minute examination of available property in the vicinity, careful weighing of the questions of expediency and relationship involved, have brought us all to the final decision that the history and progress of the past, the promise of the future, the relation of our work to neighborhood and city, all weigh in favor of the permanent location of the settlement in its present building, and we now hold the option of the purchase of these quarters at \$22,000, conceded by skillful judges of real estate, knowing property values of the vicinity, to be a reasonable price.

This would put into our possession the building just as it stands in its double lot, 80x200 feet, with private alley on the west, and entrance upon the public alley at the rear. Immediately arises the need of extensive repairs, delayed till our building problem should be solved, to put the house into permanently habitable condition, and for the accommodation of the large family who for four years have tolerated all but intolerable inconveniences. We could save in a few years the cost of a steam plant, replacing our score of wasteful, dirty and unsatisfactory stoves, and a suitable dynamo could use the same steam for lighting and cooking. The rear frame building we desire to replace with a four-story brick structure, with room for gymnasium, audience-hall, etc. In short, we are now faced with the necessity, and have entered upon the task, of raising upward of \$50,000 (in addition to the support of our work for the present year), with which to purchase the present property, replace the rear building, and fit both for permanent work and occupancy.

COMMONS TRUSTEES.

List of Those Who Comprise the Settlement's Incorporated Board.

In view of the effort to put the settlement on a sound financial footing, and of larger outlook into the future, the personnel of the settlement board of trustees ("Trustees of the Chicago Commons Association, Incorporated") is interesting. It comprises eleven members: David Fales, Esq. (Lake Forest), and Prof. H. M. Scott (West Side), represent the Chicago (Congregational) Theological Seminary board of directors and faculty; Thomas P. Ballard stands for the Evanston affiliation of the settlement, and Charles H. Hulburd, of the Board of Trade (North

Side), represents the City Missionary society's board of directors; John S. Field (Knickerbocker Ice Co.) and J. H. Strong (U. S. Life Insurance Co.) represent Plymouth Church; E. Burritt Smith, Esq. (South Side) is an officer in the University Church, and a prominent legal representative of the Civic Federation; Edward Payson (Oak Park) is treasurer, and Graham Taylor (Professor of Christian Sociology in Chicago Theological Seminary) is president of the Association and resident warden. Miss Jane Addams embodies the close and friendly encouragement which has been reciprocal between Hull House and the Commons since the latter's founding, and John P. Gavit represents the settlement residents.

A FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

Some Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of the Settlement During the Year.

IN addition to the general statement, contained in this pamphlet, regarding the financial situation and needs of Chicago Commons, those who have contributed to its support, as well as other friends, may be interested in the following details of its receipts and expenditures. During the year 1898 we were entrusted with \$6,270.98; \$1,228.71 more than in 1897. Of this amount \$4,888.18 were contributed toward the general expenses of the settlement work, and were expended in the maintenance of six residents — the rental, lighting, heat, and care of public rooms, the repair and equipment of the building, printing, postage, and other expenses incidental to the work. For specific purposes we received \$1,362.80. The kindergarten cost the settlement only \$291.36, of which \$278.48 were contributed especially toward its support. The support of the head kindergartner, Mrs. Bertha Hofer Hegner, is no longer a charge to this fund, it being provided by the Kindergarten Training Class, which has been successfully inaugurated and supervised by her on a self-sustaining basis. To the neighborhood church* account is credited the receipt from one donor of \$452.81, and the expenditure of \$461.58, principally for the maintenance of a resident who devotes

herself almost exclusively to the work of the Tabernacle Church and Sunday School. To our charity relief account was given a total of \$108.41. In emergency relief we expended \$116.05. In manual training equipment and material \$62.78 were expended from the general receipts. The Boys' Camp cost \$353.60, toward which \$300.75 were contributed, mostly by the good people of Elgin, Ill., in whose vicinity the Camp was located. The settlement scholarship of the University of Michigan provided \$42.35 for the maintenance of a representative of that institution in residence during the summer. A kindergarten scholarship, amounting to \$100, was also provided by friends in Colorado. The proceeds of "The Children's Messiah" furnished a music fund of \$50. Toward the expense of publishing THE COMMONS \$75 were specifically contributed and \$192.05 were paid out, through the settlement treasury, and there were a number of additional gifts to the paper directly. Two friends of the paper gave \$5.00 per month regularly, and Mr. T. P. Ballard's class in the First Congregational Church at Evanston contributes its collections to this purpose. It is but just to the residents to add that they pay half the expense of renting, lighting, and heating the building, that is, a sum amounting to between \$1,500 and \$1,600 per annum.

*Expenditures through the Settlement treasury in aid of the Tabernacle Church.

BEGINNINGS OF THE WORK.

How it Began With the Children and Spread into the Hearts and Homes of the Neighborhood—The Departments.

A TINY quarter of backyard, covered with broken glass and other rubbish, played no small part in the beginnings of the settlement, for it was in the possibility of a garden for the children that Miss Bertha Hofer found the concluding argument for her acceptance of the kindergarten in the settlement, for in that garden centers the industrial basis of the kindergarten. The work in the present neighborhood really began to be deep and thorough with the grasp upon family life through the children. Miss Hofer (who later became Mrs. Hegner), made one voyage of discovery and invitation for the kindergarten, and none since. At 6:30 the following morning, a horde of youngsters of every nationality and shade of cleanliness were sitting and howling and clamoring at the doorstep for the kindergarten. Then it was a very small group; now it is all but a hundred in number, overflowing from one room where it began, to fill all the basement. Then there were a handful of assistants from a distant kindergarten training school; now the settlement kindergarten is the object lesson of a Chicago Commons Kindergarten Training School, referred to elsewhere,* over which Mrs. Hegner presides with unsurpassed excellence of theory and practicability of method.

AN INDUSTRIAL KINDERGARTEN.

The Chicago Commons Kindergarten is peculiar in its industrial theory and practice. "Interdependence" has long been the "subject" of its study and

activity. Industrial and domestic processes have largely supplanted the more theoretical "occupations" of the children. The little folk planted their own garden and tended it themselves. They not only have seen the round of nature in seedtime and harvest, but they understand the labor of the farmer to whom they owe their food. They wash and iron with actual water and actually hot irons, and occasionally "cook themselves," as one little boy, with a newly-blistered finger, explained. They actually make butter, and bread, and apple-sauce. They prepare vegetables occasionally for the settlement table, and scour tins and polish silverware, actually make actual beds in the residents' rooms, and actually dust actually dusty furniture and bookshelves. In short, each child does, each day, a portion of useful domestic work.

ACCESS TO HOMES.

**Welcome to the Hearts of Mothers
Through the Children.**

The domestic work in the kindergarten not only has had its expected educational value in the development of the children in body and in mind; it has had a pronounced effect in the homes of the neighborhood, and through the affection and loyalty of the children we won at once access to the mother-hearts of the community. From that it was a short step to the organization of a most successful and inspiring Mothers' Meeting. Alternate Friday evenings are devoted to the mothers' meetings, and no feature of

*See "Kindergarten Training School" advt. Cover (3).

the work of the Commons is more effective. In the kindergarten room they gather—usually in two circles, of English and German-speaking mothers. There are, for instance, practical talks, by folks who know, on child management and the thousand perplexing details of motherhood. Then they gather for a “general exercise” of kindergarten games, songs, simple calisthenics, and other things which the mothers can put to immediate use in the homes. When it is remembered that many of these mothers were all but playless in their childhood; that in dozens of cases their mothers never sang them a song or told them a story, it will be seen how much these evenings must mean to the simple-hearted women of the tenement houses about the Commons.

THE WOMAN'S CLUB.

Opportunities for Broad Culture in the Lives of Busy Housewives.

Many women of the settlement neighborhood, however, have had larger opportunities for culture and outlook, and it was possible to organize with them a rather more autonomous life. The Chicago Commons Woman's Club accepts this opportunity. In it bright women have been emancipated from the exclusive drudgery of housekeeping, have broadened their horizon, and have taken up activities such as have afforded expression for similar but more pretentious organizations. Topics of general civic and social interest are discussed, and some of the best speakers in Chicago address the Woman's Club. These more robust exercises are interspersed with social occasions, which are among the most enjoyable incidents of the settlement's life.

One feature of the club's activity is its annual celebration of the settlement's

birthday. Three times this festival has called together a happy company of the settlement's friends and neighbors to join in celebration of the completion of a year of mutual love and service. Usually upon these occasions the club has made some useful present to the resident group. It was upon one of these occasions that a tribute was paid to the settlement by one of the women of our community in her address as president, that we have prized above any other in our history.* The president of the club, Mrs. Luther Conant of Oak Park, brings to it an inexhaustible enthusiasm, a considerable experience in women's clubs elsewhere, and a devotion to the interests of the club, collectively and individually, that must insure success.

THE GIRLS' CLUBS.

The Growing Women of the Community Organized for Mutual Helpfulness and Fellowship.

One of the earliest developments of the settlement group's relation with its neighborhood was the Girls' Progressive Club, in which several good friends of the settlement, graduates of women's colleges, came from suburban residences to join the working girls of our neighborhood in a club for mutual helpfulness, culture, and social fellowship. The club has been one of the strong arms of the settlement's work all the time. It has increased in membership from a scant half-dozen to nearly a hundred, and a rare and sisterly fellowship exists. In it are organized working girls of the Commons neighborhood, and several of the settlement residents help in the self-culture effort of the club. Circles for study of art, literature, dramatics, and even law, have made the club useful as well as enjoyable.

* See “Influence of the Settlement,” page 29.



A SOCIAL CUP OF TEA.
Unexpected Snapshot in the Mothers' Meeting Catches Smiles and All!

"Little Women," a group of about twenty girls of the neighborhood, just below the Progressive Club age, is the name of a club which grew out of the desperate need for a social gathering of the girls to whom the street offered the only evening attraction. This club meets on Thursday evenings. Social evenings, games, songs, stories, with a strong effort toward application of ethical influence upon individual conduct, have made this one of the most important and most useful phases of the settlement activity. From this, the next step down in age brings us to the clubs of younger girls, of whom, on Wednesday evenings, the house is full. To these, the resident kindergartners, with assistance of non-

resident workers, gives the pleasantest sort of an evening of games, songs, stories, sewing, and the like. The girls and boys alike enjoy the privileges of a growing circulating library, increased from time to time by gifts of books or money.

SOLVING THE BOY PROBLEM.

The Good Will Club and Its Camp—The Chess Miracle—Friday Clubs.

The boys, in their inevitable "gangs" and "bunches" and "pushes," used to be the settlement's greatest problem. The solution is not now complete by any means. No sort of activity for individual boys or groups of boys could

offset the demoralizing influences of the street life of the city center, or the effects of warping heredity and home environment. But it is not too much to say that the boys' clubs are now one of the settlement's greatest sources of pride; organized into groups under assisting workers, all subsidiary to the "blue ticket" Good Will Club, for membership in whose autonomous body, with its studies of electricity, civics and American history, the boys strive in terms of cleanliness and good behavior. This club meets on Thursday nights, the groups on Friday, with two or three small clubs meeting during the week.

THE CHESS CLUB MIRACLE.

Under this head must come the miracle of the Chess Club, the novel feature of the boys' department. It is made up of boys who once were irrepressible embodiments of perpetual motion and sleepless mischief; but who now spend often an hour or more at a time in silent study over a game of chess. This club meets on Tuesday evenings.

GOOD WILL CLUB CAMP.

Last Summer's Good Work in the Country Near Elgin—Future Possibilities.

Last summer's development of the club work was the camp, under Good Will Club auspices at Elgin, Ill. Mr. Weeks, of the settlement, who has the boys' work in charge, thus speaks of it:

"The Good Will Camp opened the latter part of May on the Frazier farm, just outside Elgin. Our farm had already been planted, and the boys who went out at the start busied themselves with caring for that and preparing the camp for the larger groups which were to come later. By July our full equipment of three tents and a cook house was ready for the rest of the boys. The camp was kept open for twelve weeks for the boys and two for the girls, during which time fifty boys and sixteen girls enjoyed its privi-

leges for periods varying from one to ten weeks.

"In its results the work came fully up to our expectations. Most apparent, perhaps, was its effect on the health of the children. The fresh air of the country, habits of cleanliness, and the plain, substantial food brought large improvement in many cases. But no less apparent to the workers was the effect on conduct. The very freedom of country life gave outlet for the boyish spirits in harmless enjoyment. The daily application to work, in which he was interested, had its steady influence on the boy."

"In addition to the influence which might be exerted by the workers through word and example, we began in camp a more direct teaching of the elements of character. This took the form of an evening service of song, scripture and prayer. The boys entered into this service heartily and reverently, and with considerable interest. On one point we found we could all agree, that the life and teaching of Jesus furnished the highest standard of character. Starting from this common ground, we tried in our vesper services to learn something of that standard, and how we might make our lives conform more nearly to it.

"Our experience of the summer added one more proof of the value of the country life in the settlement work. So well satisfied are we with this first trial, that we plan to continue it on a larger scale in the summers to come, making it a permanent feature of settlement activity. We hope that the time is not far distant when we may be able to secure as a part of our equipment a farm* where we may center all of our summer work, with its camps for the boys and the girls, its cottages for the young ladies' and women's clubs. With such a permanent center, this work on which we have made a successful start, could be far more effectively developed into a powerful influence in raising to a higher plane the lives of those among whom we live and labor."

* Since these pages were put into type and formed for printing, a farm of about 23 acres, with buildings, etc., on one of the small Wisconsin lakes, just over the Illinois line, about 40 miles from Chicago, has been placed at the settlement's disposal, and preparations for the summer work will begin there at once. Progress will be reported upon from time to time in the columns of THE COMMONS.



THE CHILDREN'S CHORUS.

SETTLEMENT MUSIC.

**Adult and Children's Choruses Gather the
Singers of The Commons
Neighborhood.**

Two successful choruses are features of the settlement's work. Both the Chicago Commons Choral Club for adults and the Children's Choral Club have been in full swing since the earliest days of the settlement's existence. Under the exceptionally competent and inspiring direction of Miss Mari R. Hofer, the choruses have grown in numbers and enthusiasm and have given several successful concerts in the large hall of the neighborhood.

The piano is constantly used, of course, in the kindergarten, and there have been vocal, piano, mandolin, guitar and violin students from the neighborhood. During one winter a mandolin and guitar club was carried on with enthusiasm. This will be revived soon, if the increasing demand is any criterion.

SUNDAY AT THE COMMONS.

Gatherings With Broadly Religious Purposes—The Pleasant Sunday Afternoon.

The definitely religious activities of the residents are chiefly centered at the neighboring Tabernacle Church. There the avowed propaganda of Christian doctrine can be carried on without re-

serve, and without divisive effect in the community. But the need of effort to command the will to righteous conduct and relationship is by no means evaded in the settlement itself. To the question "What religious work do you carry on?" we insistently answer that we forbid ourselves to do anything. that is *not* religious! We endeavor to keep always in mind that philanthropy of the material sort alone is mockery, that education which touches only the intellect is worse than useless, and that even fellowship and social action unhallowed and uninspired by a passion for *righteousness*, are travesties.

To inspire to right conduct and pure living is the least we can seek to do, and while the possibility of didactic teaching and formal religious effort is limited, and the purpose of social unification prevents divisive theological preaching or discussion, we bend every energy to hold up the ideal of right social living and right individual action.

It is with this in view that we have organized our Sunday work. An attempt at a Sunday Kindergarten was misconstrued by even our best Catholic mother-friends, though oddly enough it did not affect the week-day attendance. But quite successful and undoubtedly beneficial have been the Sunday afternoon clubs, in which the children have heard with interest stories and some quite formal teaching of the quieter and more thoughtful kind, have sung together songs of social purpose, and have seemed themselves to recognize the more direct purpose of the occasion.

THE PLEASANT SUNDAY AFTERNOON.

Beginning with the second Sunday in February, we resumed our "Pleasant Sunday Afternoon," intermitted so as to give a fair start to the "People's Hour" evening service at the Tabernacle. Every

effort will be made to make this a social hour for ethical uplift, presenting, with all the aid of music and other auxiliary attractions, and with rigid avoidance of controversial and sectarian, or otherwise divisive vocabulary, moral and spiritual truth for incarnation in daily life.

TABERNACLE CO-OPERATION.

Cordial Relation Between the Settlement and the Neighborhood Church.

From the foundation of the settlement, its affiliation and co-operation with the Tabernacle church has been one of its most notable characteristics. Again and again it has sacrificed its own immediate work and time to the service of the neighborhood church. For the last two years Professor Taylor has yielded to its need by serving gratuitously in its pastorate, and several residents of the settlement now devote their time partially or wholly to the church work. Rev. H. J. Condit, the active associate pastor, is a resident of the Commons, devoting his entire service to the church. Miss Florence E. Patrick has been superintendent of the Sunday school and head of the girls' clubs at the church and reserves little of herself or her time for the settlement itself. Miss E. May Smith conducts the daily and Sunday kindergarten, and Mr. Weeks gives an evening to the boys' clubs of the church. Several residents are office-holders in the church, or teachers in the Sunday school. Most are members of the church. Years of experience and untold hours of conference have led us to the decision that any organic coalition would be disastrous to both institutions, but increasing co-operation in service, and even in administration, is assured both by inevitably conspiring circumstances and by the earnest desire of all most personally concerned.

BREATHS OF SUMMER.

Outings for the Families in the Breathless Congestion of Sun-baked City Centers—
Children in the Grass.

ONLY those who have passed breathless, blistering nights in crowded city quarters know how true it is that the poor suffer in summer more intensely, if possible, than in winter. With the thermometer at 98° at midnight for a week of intolerable days and less tolerable nights, life becomes all but unbearable. Driven by the indescribable heat and persistent mosquitoes (none larger or more maliciously insistent ever grew in the famous New Jersey swamps!) some of us have made the tour of neighboring streets and alleys in the hours before the blistering dawn, stepping over the prone bodies of heat-exhausted sleepers upon the side-

walks; our ears beset with the whimpering cry of sleepy children who cannot sleep for the heat; our nostrils choked with nameless smells. In weather like this, for poor folks ice is an impossibility, milk is well-nigh sour almost when delivered; vegetables, none too fresh at purchase, are wilted within an hour; meat is o'er-weary before mealtime. Sickness besets the children with unerring certainty, and little white crepe is a common sight upon the doors.

THE SUMMER MINISTRY.

No ministry of the settlement is more satisfactory than that of providing escape for never so few from the desperate im-



MAKING UP THE POSIES.

prisonment of summer in the city. Outings in the parks for those who cannot leave the city, picnics to suburban fields and woods, follow day after day. For those who cannot leave home at all, our friends in country towns for miles around



CHILDREN IN THE GRASS.

send baskets and boxes of flowers to be distributed where they will do most good.

LONGER COUNTRY WEEKS.

From outlying towns—some as far away as Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Iowa—come invitations for neighbors; father, mother, children—sometimes the whole family!—to spend a week, a fortnight, a month, in a few cases the whole summer. Fresh-air parties come and go almost daily, and among the happiest results of our settlement work we count the established friendships of city and country folk thus begun.

Reference is made elsewhere* to the special outings of the boys and girls at Elgin, and the farm plans under way.

In several cases the summer visit has led to an entire removal of a person, or even a family, from the crowding and dirt of the city to the country and the soil. The entire rehabilitation of one or two families have thus been brought about.

EDUCATIONAL CLASSES.

Co-operation of the Settlement to Supply Educational Deficiencies.

PRIVILEGES of education are offered by nearly all settlements to the working people of their neighborhoods, who, deprived of the opportunities of school and reading by the necessity of going early to work, aspire to improve themselves in the evening hours. The demand for educational opportunities is very real and constant, and the classes which have grown up as friendly groups are among the brightest and most useful parts of our work.

The schedule of classes and clubs on the second page of the cover of this book gives a good idea of the scope of the work, and other classes are in demand. It is our effort to make these class-groups as social as possible, and to make the education incidental to the social contact involved.

In addition to this we have always co-operated to the fullest possible extent with the neighborhood schools.



A SEVENTEENTH WARD COTTAGE.

* "Good-Will Club Camp," p. 18.

"THE CHICAGO COMMONS TUESDAY MEETING."

History and Description of the Open Forum Which Draws All Classes to Frank Discussion and Mutual Understanding.—A Characteristic Anecdote Concerning the Religious Question.

IN THE saloons of the poorer districts, as in the clubs of the more prosperous, men gather in groups to discuss the topics and interests of the day. These discussions are characterized by absolute freedom of speech and democracy of personnel. Every shade of belief, social, political, religious, from *laissez faire* individualism back to force-anarchism, from communist socialism to survival of the fittest, from ultra-conservative cathol-

licism to "free-thought," find expression in those hand-to-hand disputes of neighborhood opinion. It was the most obvious opportunity of the settlement, as regards the men of the community, to offer place and occasion for just such a free discussion, apart from the environment and temptations of the saloon.

Out of precisely this need and this opportunity has grown to notable and all but famous success "the Chicago Com-



A KNOTTY QUESTION.

Group of the Discussers Remain in the Old Basement to Solve a Problem of the Universe—Snap Shot in the "Tuesday Meeting."

mons Tuesday Meeting." It is at once a most useful, a most far-reaching, and the least understood feature of the settlement's work. Those who characterize it as a "nest of anarchists," those who think of, and visit it as some sort of a social circus, and those who regard it as a weak-kneed apology for a religious meeting, alike fail to discern its purpose and its value, alike misunderstand and misrepresent it.

The "Tuesday Meeting" is none of these things. It is the settlement's deliberate proposition that all classes of men, all shades of thought, all degrees of prosperity and of culture, shall for once come face to face and "have it out." It calls men out of their corners where they nurse their grievances and brood social distrust and potential disorder, to bring their discontent and their theory of social salvation into the light of day, for full examination and frank discussion. Assuming the good faith and good intentions of the average man, it offers one of the few oases of self-conscious democracy in the wilderness of social confusion and industrial chaos, where distinctions of class and caste may be ignored, and mere human manhood may be the title to free speech and frank opinion.

Four years of experience have proved to the men who attend the meeting the good faith of the settlement, and they characterize it as "the freest floor in Chicago." With only so much of organization as is implied in the presence of one of the men of the settlement as chairman, yet subject to the vote of the meeting, an orderly, intensely interested and interesting weekly meeting continues from October to June. The business-man and the anarchist, the minister and the agnostic, the socialist and the single taxer, the woman suffragist and her eternally protesting anti-suffrage sister,

all have equal rights on the floor under the simple rules of mutual consideration, adherence to the subject under discussion, utterly free speech, all sides, no favor, and a reasonable time limit, which the meeting can extend at its pleasure.

"Ethics and Competition," "The Labor Movement," "The Money Question," "The Church and the Labor Movement," "Socialism," "The Single Tax," "The Situation in the Philippines," "The Problem of the Unemployed," "The Department Store," "Municipal Ownership," "Woman Suffrage," "Anarchism," "Slavery, Ancient and Modern," "Child Labor," "The Survival of the Fittest," "The American Federation of Labor," "Patriotism and Politics," "Walt Whitman," "Joseph Mazzini," "Robert Burns," "Tolstoy and the Russian Peasant," "Parental Schools," "Labor and Law," "The Evolution of the Trade Unionist," "Social Purity," "Labor Copartnership," "Trusts and Monopolies," "Some Fallacies About Corporations," "The Future of the Middleman"—these are some of the subjects concerning which discussion has sought to find the truth.

It is unfair, however, to characterize the settlement by this meeting. The entire work can no more be judged by it than the character of a church should be judged by one Bible-class. It occupies but two hours out of a tremendously busy week. Nor is it permissible to ask for tabulated results. If the question of religious teachings be raised—the most intense interest and feeling always attaches to the deepest ethical and religious questions, which will not down. The discussion of the historicity of the life of Jesus lasted till past midnight, and nearly every meeting elicits some aspect of the ethical problem. The first meetings generated tremendous heat and personal bitterness; that is now a thing of the



GLIMPSE OF THE SLOYD CLASS.

Commons Boys Do Not Hold Still Long Enough to Get Even a Satisfactory Snap Shot!

long past. Mutual toleration and respect, and no small modification of opinion has taken place.

Let one anecdote serve as illustration. It is taken from an article by Professor Taylor in *THE COMMONS*:*

The battle was on between socialism and individualism. An eminent socialist leader, from the workingmen's own ranks, had presented his argument, when a stranger to the men (not a "workingman") arose and thus took up the gauntlet that had been thrown down before all comers:

"I am tired of hearing this 'brotherhood' talk among workingmen, and this appeal to the stronger to help the weak-

er. By Force all things that exist are evolved, maintained, perpetuated. In nature, only the fit survive. Everywhere and always the debilitated perish. Everywhere and always the mightiest have won. Black, furious and tragic are the bloody annals of Man's evolution. In business and in industry competition must be to the death. The strongest beast gets the biggest bone. Might is master—it ought to be—for progress depends upon its triumph. With the *normal* man it is a pleasure to struggle, a pastime to fight, and nothing is sweeter to him than to confiscate his confiscator and surpass his surpasser; to smite his enemy, hip and thigh, and to spoil him

*From *The Commons*, March, 1897.

of that of which he has despoiled others. The normal man prefers to eat others, rather than to be eaten. Only with the abnormal man it is otherwise. He is of the mob. He sheepishly obeys public opinion. He is of a 'flock.' Might is right, absolutely, unreservedly. The chief intent of false religions and false moralisms is to arrest competition half way, in order to safeguard degenerates in possessing that which they could neither seize nor defend, if competition were unlimited.

"The Golden Rule," he continued, "never has been, is not, and never will be practicable. It is a lying dream. Grim and harsh all this may appear to nervous souls, but is it not true to nature?"

It is not within the province of our present purpose to describe the effect upon our own or other minds of this inhuman declaration of what the speaker was pleased to call the "Philosophy of Power." But it does subserve the object for which this incident has been cited to note the fact that for the first time in the writer's long observation, this particular group of radically disagreeing men was instantly by the shock to common human instinct, welded into unanimity, expressing itself first in startled silence, then in awestruck murmurs of disavowal, finally in the common consent of indignant protest.

THE SOCIALIST'S RETORT.

The socialist arose to say his final word and close the discussion.

"There is in nature," said he, "as Drummond teaches us, a struggle for the life of others, as surely as for the life of self. This mother instinct prevails in every realm of life. The hyena type of animal shows it least." And, pointing his finger at the stranger, he exclaimed,

"That man's evolution seems to have been arrested at the hyena stage!"

"This is not the power impelling human progress! Have the best things of the world been prompted by selfishness and achieved by competition? Are the highest things that man possesses in art, literature and music, through discovery and invention, either the product or the possession of this brute force? No, no, no! The struggle for the life of others, not selfishness, the co-operation of brothers, not the competition of beasts, have given the world its best things. Our common possessions only have proven fittest to survive."

And with tears in his tone he concluded, "It was to get out of all of us the beast which we see in that man yonder that He who gave us the Golden Rule, died on the cross, and it makes a fellow's heart full to think of it!"



A COZY CORNER.
Glimpse of the Girl's Club Room.

INFLUENCE OF THE SETTLEMENT.

Tribute of a Neighbor as to the Place of the Commons in the People's Life—Reflex Action Upon Individuals and Communities.

OUR non-resident associates all over the country will appreciate as fully as we do, the following words of one of our neighbors, at the birthday party given by the Girls' Progressive Club and the Woman's Club, to commemorate the second anniversary of the opening of the house. Speaking for both

clubs, the president of the latter thus voiced what we are glad to know is the common sentiment of the neighborhood :

"I have looked forward with so much eagerness to this meeting that I am almost at a loss for words to express the pleasure I now feel at the sight of so many friends on this



THE TABERNACLE CHURCH.
(Grand Avenue and Morgan Street.)

eventful occasion. I am sure our presence here is the best token of our love for the Commons and its inmates.

"Two years ago, when some of us paid our first visit to the Commons, we had not the slightest conception of what it would become to us. Some of us had left homes in small country villages, where we knew every one, and every one knew us. We came to this large city, and found ourselves shut up in our homes, as if they were jails. We were afraid to speak with our neighbors, and our neighbors were afraid of us. When the Chicago Commons opened its doors, and invited us to visit there, we hardly knew what it meant. But we called, and to our surprise found ourselves among friends—friends that were interested in us and in our daily lives. Its doors were open to us at any and all times, with a sympathizing friend always ready to listen to us, encourage, and help us amidst the trials and discouragements that come to all of us some time or other. Very soon we began to wonder how we ever managed to exist without the Commons. Now, through its instrumentality we do know and speak with our neighbors as our Woman's Club can testify. And I know that I but voice the thought of my sisters in the various clubs when I say, how much we appreci-

ate the privilege of coming together here once a week, and how much we enjoy our meetings, both business and social. I am sure every one of you will join with me in asking God to bless the Commons and its workers, and give them long life and prosperity."

After presenting the lemonade bowl and cups, as the birthday gift of the clubs to the house, she added, "We hope you will not think us selfish in choosing the gift we have. It is true, we hope to partake many times of its contents; but always *with* you, and with many others yet to join us."

No better expression of the aim and spirit of the Settlement movement has come to us than in these sincere words of our good friend and neighbor, from whose pencil and crumpled sheet of paper we have copied them. The motive of our whole movement lies in those last few words, "*with* you and *with* many."—*From The Commons, November, 1898.*

REFLEXIVE INFLUENCE.

Outreach of the Settlement to the Communities and Individuals Who Co-operate in its Service-Fellowships.

Highly as we may value our opportunities of direct influence in the local neighborhood about the settlement, as high an estimate, if not higher, must be placed upon the opportunities for reflex influence upon the communities and

individuals co-operating in the work, or even only hearing of its progress. Into every state of the Middle West, and constantly widening into those both West and East, from Colorado to Connecticut, from Wisconsin to Louisiana, the story of the settlement, and what is more, the inspiration of the social motive for which it stands, even though it fails of more than partial fulfillment, has gone abroad through the constantly extending lectureship of the Warden and some of the other residents. As the story has been told in churches, synagogues, schools, seminaries, universities, Chautauquas, farmers' institutes, women's clubs, teachers' conventions, ministers' meetings, labor gatherings, Y. M. C. A. conventions, in all seasons of the year, men and women have gained new points of view and inspiration for social service. Sev-

eral other settlements have been started under the direct inspiration of the story of Chicago Commons, churches have broadened their work, clubs have taken on new lines of study.

THE SETTLEMENT MONTHLY.

The settlement monthly, *THE COMMONS*, for which our settlement has furnished financial responsibility as well as editorial management, goes now into every civilized land, not to mention the mission fields of China and Africa. It gains steadily in value and influence, and approves itself as a legitimate branch of settlement effort. To its slowly assuring financial stability friends in California, Ohio, New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts have contributed varying sums. The settlement treasury, as shown in the financial statement, contributes from time to time, but the financial support of



"THE CLUB WILL COME TO ORDER!"

the paper is quite distinct from that of the settlement, and it is confidently expected shortly to be self-supporting.

UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIPS.

We have always hoped that sooner or later several residents would be supported by separate fellowship from organizations outside. There is good prospect of several instances of fulfillment of this hope. In one case it is a thrice-completed fact, for two Fellows from the University of Michigan have spent summers with us. Dr. Jesse K. Marden, now of Aintab, Turkey, and Mr. H. B. Harrison, were with us in the summers of 1897 and 1898, respectively. The selections for 1899 are not made at this writing, but there will probably be more than one this year. These students added their personalities and talents to the settlement force, and gained new impetus and new point of view for their lives. We have no doubt of the desire and ability of the University students and faculty to make this a perennial contribution to the social service and to their own reflex gain.

ECONOMIC CONFERENCES.

The Settlement a Center For Wider Outlook and Meeting—Groups For Occasional Gatherings on Larger Scope.

The Commons, like other settlements, Hull House in particular, has fulfilled a more than local function in its acting as a center for widely-known and important social economic conferences. "Social Function of Education," "Social Reconstruction," "Social Religion," have been topics of influence and outlook which have been discussed with vigor and enthusiasm by widely representative gatherings. Other conferences of this general sort will be held from time to time.

STUDENTS' CONFERENCES.

Less representative but no less useful is the gathering of students from the theological seminaries in and about Chicago, which from time to time has been held. This meeting has afforded to those who are studying in preparation for the help of their fellow-men an opportunity to hear from the lips of representative men, labor leaders, and the like, views of the problems they will have to face in their ministry.

CIVIC CO-OPERATION.

Residents of the settlement have given themselves to many sorts of social activity outside of the mere neighborhood work which is set forth in detail in this pamphlet. Mr. Hegner was for two years the city's ward inspector of streets and alleys. Mr. Todd has served in the same capacity. Miss Ida E. Hegner, while a resident of the settlement was also in efficient service as teacher in one of the public schools, Mr. Gavit devoted last summer to organizing the public playground work in the school yards, and continues at the head of the volunteer committee in that behalf. In addition to this the time of several residents is partially or even wholly devoted to service in the Tabernacle church, and in local tenement house inspection, police-court visiting, and the like, various residents have served from time to time.

INFLUENCE IN POLITICS.

The Settlement's Service As a Rallying Place For the Better Elements in The Seventeenth Ward.

In all the local campaigns of the Seventeenth Ward since its founding the settlement has taken a more or less active part, and its service as a rallying place for the better civic impulses of the people has been one of the chief means of reaching the life of the community.

Early in the history of the settlement, the 17th Ward Council of the Civic Federation was organized and proved a rarely fraternal and notably effective brotherhood of good citizens for civic improvement. There were several campaigns for the clearing of the ward of dives and gambling places, and no small service was rendered in securing street cleaning and repair. A permanent improvement in the attitude of the people of the ward on the subject of garbage removal and cleanliness of yards and alleys was wrought by systematic campaigns of education.

In politics, the group of earnest men organized in the Civic Federation has at least four times thrown the balance of power toward or against the election of candidates for alderman, and while trickery in the counting of the vote twice defrauded the ward of the fruits of the

effort, twice it has resulted in sending to the city council men pledged to honesty in office.

It was thought wise this year to create a new organization for civic activity and the newly organized Seventeenth Ward Municipal Club has headquarters at the settlement. The response of the men of the ward gives promise that the club will surpass the Civic Federation in interest and effectiveness.

Neighborhood socials form one of the most delightful phases of the relation of the settlement to its community. We try to assure one at least once a month, but residents desire to have some sort of social at the settlement as often as once a week. All of the clubs and some of the classes conduct their own socials, so that by little the settlement has come to be truly a neighborhood center for the community.



IN THE CHESS CLUB.

CHILDREN IN SETTLEMENTS.

Professor Taylor's Letter to an Inquirer on an Interesting Question.

THERE is probably no question in connection with the work of the settlements in general, and Chicago Commons in particular, that has attracted so much interest and query as that involved in the presence of children in the settlement. Especially since Professor Taylor moved with his family, including two little girls, into the Commons residence, has this question been one of the first and most persistent to be asked, particularly by persons interested in settlement work almost to the point of entering upon it, yet deterred by reason of having small children.

On this point probably there could be no clearer statement of the case than in a recent letter sent by Professor Taylor to an anxious inquirer who had represented the urgent objections and protest of not a few other correspondents:

I am anxious that you should understand our position regarding children in the settlement, so that you can intelligently see and discuss the issue from the settlement point of view. I protest against considering the property line, or the more or less arbitrary social classification, to be the test of the character of one's children's associates. The same discrimination is demanded of the parent among the richer as among the poorer classes, on the boulevards as in the industrial residential districts, in the private school as in the public school, in the class church as in the people's church.

My judgment is based upon observation and experience on both sides of this

artificial and superimposed line. I received more harm, as a boy, in the aforesaid select circles, to which I was quite exclusively confined, than my children have from their broader, more democratic, yet not less carefully considered associations. We feel that neither they nor we can afford to limit life to any little horizontal level, or to allow it to belong to any class, either that of poorer or richer, less cultivated or more cultivated. So we try to keep in personal touch with and have personal friends in both. Whatever we may lose in exterior surroundings by living in this working people's district (which none should consider a "slum") is, perhaps, more than made up by the high ideal and standard of relationship which steadily obtains within the settlement household. Whatever may be lacking in little luxuries is, perhaps, more than compensated for by not a few very real and rare privileges. Whatever the immediate neighborhood in our former surroundings might have afforded us, a wider range and choicer selection of associations are strangely, though naturally, attracted to the settlement circle. Whatever may be sacrificed in the lesser accomplishments, is more than counterbalanced by that larger purposefulness which adds more of an educative and essential value to every life.

APROPPOS of this question is the story that has been going the rounds of the press lately, of the little boy whose prudent mother forbade his playing with the boy next door, on the ground that the latter was not a suitable playmate:

"But, mamma," the boy asked, "what cannot I play with George?"

"I think he is not a good enough boy for you to play with."

"Do you think I'm a better boy than he is?"

"Usually, yes."

"Well then, perhaps I'm a good kind of a boy for *him* to play with."

—*The Commons*, Aug., 1897.

LIFE IN THE SOCIAL SETTLEMENT.

Many Recurring Questions Answered in the Following Glimpse of the Personal and Domestic Relationships.

NO SMALL proportion of the questions that are asked by those whose interest is drawn to the settlement have reference to the life within the house. They vary all the way from those of folk who regard our group as a highly disciplined sort of monastic fraternity, to those, on the other hand, who look upon our life as a sort of "perpetual philanthropic picnic." Asks one: "Are the inmates allowed to speak to each other?" * An-

other: "And do all these boys in the boys' clubs live in the house with you?" Another: "Don't you ever go out somewhere and get a square meal?" Another: "How many Italian families live in this house with you?"

Some seem to take it amiss that we have carpets and pictures and a piano, and one good lady suggested that we were rather better dressed and *much* better fed than she supposed! Another suggested that she had really nerved herself to the risk of taking some contagious

* A question actually asked by one visitor.



YOUNGSTERS IN THE SAND PILE.

disease from us, and was visibly surprised, if not disappointed, at the assurance that we had never had such a thing in the house, save one case of whooping cough, which one of our own family children contracted during a visit to a highly favored residence district and inflicted upon the poor children of the entire kindergarten!

It is, therefore, undoubtedly timely and necessary to say that the people who live in Chicago Commons are entirely normal and ordinary folks, wearing ordinary clothing, eating as good food as they can afford, living the life suggested by their own tastes and characters—a jolly, friendly, air-breathing, omnivorous score or so of human people. They are not better and probably not worse than any other like number of well-meaning, fairly well-educated people of the middle class of Americans. They are not ascetics, nor desire to be. In a happy, wholesome way they try to serve each other and their neighbors, and it is unanimously their experience and testimony that they get quite as much as they give in their settlement relationships.

A settlement resident is not required to be better than other people. Indeed, morbid self-consciousness and seeking for social martyrdom are about the most effective disqualifications for usefulness. The settlement needs happy, purposeful, wholesome human beings, who are ready to forget themselves in their devotion to the effort to promote happiness, purpose, wholesomeness and normal human life for and among their fellow-men. Nothing that is good to know or to enjoy anywhere is out of place in a social settlement. The intellectual equipment required cannot be stated; no degree of true education or culture could be too great—yet none can take the place of true moral purpose and devotion, in love

of humanity. Languages and literature, handicraft, domestic skill, music, art, social graces, the culture of travel, and, above all, personal tact—all have specific and general usefulness.

COST OF LIVING.

The cost of living in a settlement varies with taste and economy. Extravagant persons are not usually likely to enjoy a life of simple, social service. The fixed expenses, subject to change at any time by vote of the Residents' Club, which controls the domestic life, are at this writing about \$20 per month—including rent of room, board, room-laundry and heavier cleaning, heating and lighting. In addition to this are personal laundry, extra charges for private guests and the like.

The living within the house is co-operative, the Club sharing expenses of common kitchen and dining-room, the support of housekeeper, and certain other domestic and administrative expenses. Each Resident assists to some extent (governed by circumstances) in the service of the common comfort.

PRIVILEGES OF RESIDENCE.

The sense and actuality of a common motive in an expression of common helpfulness is of course the chief delight of residence. But there are specific privileges and advantages as well. Let no one suppose that settlement residence is a dreary sequence of social and personal deprivation! The good and true and blessed souls of the earth make the settlement a Meccá. It is a sort of caravansarai of the purposeful, as they pass by on their missions to the neglected corners of the earth. At no other place is there a more constant opportunity of meeting on terms of equal fellowship people "worth while." And the "worth while" folk are from every class and

clime. The sum total of real social privilege would not be excelled or equaled in any center of so-called "society," where, in a foolish and purposeless monotony, people who esteem themselves in some mysterious way better than their fellows, swap identical favors with those only who can return in kind!

A brief daily vesper service, after dinner and before the evening work begins, extending on Saturday evening into a more extensive "Residents' Meeting," affords unity of action and mutual fel-

lowship, and gives fully-improved opportunity for exchange of broader thought and culture. It is the "family altar" of the settlement, presided over by residents in turn, and to it the neighbors often accept our cordial welcome. Readings, original local and general studies, essays, etc., are features of these evening gatherings.

MANAGEMENT OF THE SETTLEMENT.

The management of settlement details will be suggested best in the following, recently-adopted

Basis of Organization.

- I. Within the settlement, executive management shall vest in two committees of the residents—the Executive Committee and the House Committee.
 1. The Executive Committee shall consist of five residents, and shall have jurisdiction over all applications for residence, and over all the actual work of the settlement, the adoption of new lines of work, the apportionment of duties among resident and non-resident workers, etc. The Warden shall be, *ex-officio*, an additional member of the Executive Committee.
 2. The House Committee shall consist of five residents, and shall have jurisdiction over the domestic arrangements of the settlement household; shall appoint or employ a housekeeper, who shall be, *ex-officio*, a member of the House Committee (either in addition to, or included in, the five residents, as the case may be), and in general shall take cognizance of all matters pertaining to the comfort and safety of the household, including current janitor service, and the distribution of room-space and seating at the table, as occasion may arise. The Warden shall be, *ex-officio*, an additional member of the House Committee.
- II. These committees shall be chosen by secret ballot of all the residents, at an election to be held in May of each year, and shall take office on the first of September following their election, to serve one year, or until their successor shall have taken office.
- III. The election shall be conducted in the following manner:
 1. As nearly as may be, the election for Executive Committee shall be held on the first Saturday in May, and that for House Committee on the Monday following.
 2. Each resident shall be provided with a typewritten or printed ballot for each committee, containing the names of all qualified residents of the settlement, the ballots to be entitled respectively "Executive Com-

mittee" and "House Committee." Ballots for Executive Committee will be distributed at least five days before the date of election; those for House Committee will be distributed when the result of the election of Executive Committee is announced.

3. The election shall be conducted by two tellers, appointed in advance by the Warden. They shall provide a suitable ballot box, which shall be open in some convenient place throughout the day of the election. Absent members may vote by mail.
 4. Votes will be indicated by marking an "X" before each of any five names upon the ballot, *provided*, however, that no more than two persons may be members of both committees at the same time. The five persons upon each list, having the greatest number of votes in their favor, shall be members of the committees respectively.
- IV. Vacancies in these committees, by resignation or otherwise, shall be filled by secret ballot of all the residents in like manner as in the case of the original election.
- V. Each of these committees shall organize themselves and choose their own chairman, etc., and shall meet regularly at least once a week at a given hour and place, in order to receive and consider suggestions, complaints, and other business. Three members of either committee shall constitute a quorum thereof, and any action of either committee shall be subject to review by the residents' meeting.
- VI. All applications for residence in the settlement shall be received by the Executive Committee, and by them shall be considered privately. Upon their favorable decision applicants will be received into probationary residence for a term not to exceed thirty days, at the end of which time, if the application is continued, the residents, in executive session, shall vote by secret ballot upon the application. Two negative votes shall constitute a rejection. No person shall hereafter be regarded as a resident until he has been thus elected into residence.

Gifts for the Settlement.

As is noted elsewhere, the Chicago Commons Association is incorporated under the laws of Illinois, and is qualified to hold property. Hence, gifts and bequests are properly protected under the law.

FORM OF BEQUEST.

"I give and bequeath to the Chicago Commons Association (incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois), the sum of \$, to be devoted to the social settlement work of that Association."

NOTES OF THE SETTLEMENT.

Various Jottings of the Life and Activity During the Years of the Commons Work.

—We can use any sort of willingness,

—We greatly need a permanent resident who speaks Italian.

—Ten dollars a year provides for a child in the kindergarten.

—Old illustrated magazines can be used in almost any quantity.

—No sum of money is too small to be of use in the settlement's work.

—A telephone has been added to the settlement's equipment. The call number is Main 3551.

—A pressing need of the settlement is a small loan fund, to be used with discretion for the relief of emergency distress.

—In the matter of formal charity (alms-giving) we co-operate with the West Side Branch of the Bureau of Associated Charities.

—Adequate room and equipment for our cooking classes is a serious need. Nevertheless, we are proud of our several classes, doing good work in discouraging circumstances.

—The Penny Provident Savings Bank, under the auspices of the Civic Federation, has an effective branch at the settlement. There have been upward of 200 depositors.

—The drinking fountain presented to the settlement by the Evanston Woman's Club is a continuous godsend to the thousands who pass by on Milwaukee avenue on the hot days, and it saves no insignificant sum in beer money during a year.

—The neighborhood doctors and druggists, almost without exception, cheerfully answer the calls of the settlement for help in the ministry to the destitute. We are also aided by the dispensary of the Illinois Medical College, across the street.

—The man or woman, or any number of him or her, who gives the boys and girls of this community an adequate gymnasium will do more to help the young people to self-control than words of prophecy can describe. We know exactly what we could do in this way

with a comparatively small sum of money.

—A good manual training outfit provides for the boys and girls in classes of twelve, and we have had good instruction in basket-weaving, chair-caning, wood-carving and whittling. We hope soon to add simple mosaic, ironwork, leather and brass repousse, and other forms of handicraft.

—Three to four hundred dollars will keep an expert and devoted worker in the settlement for one year, devoting his or her whole time to the work of some department. We are constantly offered the services of well-equipped workers, willing to devote themselves to Settlement services for the mere subsistence of living.

—A score of stoves, with which we have to heat our building, compel a very great waste of coal, heart-breaking conflict with eternal dirt, and highly unsatisfactory results as far as heating is concerned. A suitable steam-heating plant would not only obviate these inconveniences, but would enable us to use the same steam, with a small dynamo, to light the building as well.

—A circulating loan collection of good pictures, most of them photographs or reproductions of famous pictures, is growing in scope and usefulness. It was established in memory of Edward A. Danforth, a former resident of the settlement, who died in the service of the people of our community. His work was especially with the Italian young men, in which he has never been succeeded.

—The Public Library is too near the Commons to admit at present of a neighborhood municipal reading-room and too far away for effective influence; hence the settlement has been obliged to provide library privileges, though its ability is thus far ridiculously inadequate. Through the kindness of the Parmelee Library Company, a traveling library of fifty volumes is kept refreshed for the adult clubs, and a slowly augmenting children's library is all but unanimously patronized by the boys and girls. We are greatly in need of subscriptions to the standard periodicals, to reinforce our large array of reform and radical papers obtained by exchange with THE COMMONS.

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